

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 QUITO 05731 131736Z

41

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 DHA-02 IO-13

CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 /070 W

----- 118250

O 131710 AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1154

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 5731

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC EC

SUBJ: AMERICAN CLERGYMEN DETAINED BY GOE

1. I WAS CALLED AT 1:00 A.M. THIS MORNING BY THE ACTING MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT WHO INFORMED ME THAT GOE SECURITY FORCES HAD BROKEN UP A MEETING OF BISHOPS IN RIOBAMBA AND HAD DETAINED THE PARTICIPANTS, WHO INCLUDED FIVE U.S. CITIZENS. THE POLICE HAD SEIZED DOCUMENTS AT THE MEETING THAT WERE "CLEARLY SUBVERSIVE". THE AMERICANS AND THE OTHER FOREIGNERS WOULD BE EXPELLED FROM ECUADOR, HE SAID. HE WAS INFORMING ME AT THE REQUEST OF SUPREME COUNCIL MEMBER, GENERAL DURAN. IT APPEARED THAT THE MEETING HAD BEEN FINANCED BY " \$20,000 CONTRIBUTION FROM THE AMERICANS. HOWEVER, THE GOE HAD CONCLUDED THAT THE AMERICANS HAD DONE SO "INNOCENTLY".

2. I ASKED THE MINISTER WHETHER THE US. PRELATES WERE UNDER ARREST. HE SAID NO, THAT THEY HAD BEEN BROUGHT TO QUITO FOR QUESTIONING, AND BEEN "INVITED" TO LEAVE ECUADOR. I SAID THAT I WOULD LIKE AN EMBASSY OFFICER TO VISIT THEM. HE SAID THAT THEY HAD NOT ASKED TO SEE ANY US. EMBASSY OFFICIALS. I SAID THAT, NEVERTHELESS, UNLESS THEY WERE LEAVING IMMEDIATELY, I WANTED AN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 QUITO 05731 131736Z

EMBASSY OFFICER TO SEE THEM. HE AGREED TO AUTHORIZE A VISIT IN THE MORNING. AFTER TALKING FURTHER WITH THE MINISTER THIS MORNING, I HAVE SENT TWO EMBASSY OFFICERS TO THE MILITARY BARRACKS WHERE THE PRIESTS ARE BEING HELD TO INTERVIEW THEM.

3. ACCORDING TO THE MINISTER, THE PRIESTS WERE BROUGHT TO QUITO YESTERDAY, GIVEN ROOMS AT THE REGIMIENTO QUITO AND HAVE BEEN ACCORDED "ALL FACILITIES". HE SAID PLANE CONNECTIONS ARE BEING ARRANGED TO GET THEM OUT OF THE COUNTRY AS FAST AS POSSIBLE. HE DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE OF THEIR "SUBVERSIVE PLANS" IS "OVERWHELMING," HE SAYD, AND THEIR DESIGNS TO "PROMOTE CHAOS" EXTEND TO A NUMBER OF LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES, AS WELL AS THE UNITED STATES. HE OFFERED TO GIVE ME COPIES OF THE "EVIDENCE".

4. THE NAMES OF THE DETAINEES ARE.

PAUL SEVILLO, PRIEST

PATRICIO FLORES, BISHOP, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

ROBERT SANCHEZ, ARCHBISHOP NEX MEXICO

GILBERT CHAVEZ, BSIHOP, SAN DIEGO

JUAN ARZUBE, BISHOP, LOS ANGELES

THE MINISTER SAID THAT ALSO DETAINED IS A COLOMBIAN, (FNU) BELTRAN WHOSE ADDRESS IS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

5. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, THE MEETING WAS SPONSORED BY THE LATIN AMERICAN EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE (CELAM) AND WAS HOSTED BY LEONIDAS PROANO, THE BISHOP OF RIOBAMBA, WHO IS A CONTROVERSIAL FIGURE IN ECUADOR, OFTEN ACCUSEDH OF BEING A "RED".

6. THE PAPAL NUCIO HAD TOLD ME SOME WEEKS AGO OF HIS PREOCCUPATION WITH THISMEETING, WHICH HE SAID HE HAD DISCOVERED HAD BEEN CONVOKED BY PROANO "SECRETARY" UN-CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 QUITO 05731 131736Z

BEKNOWNST TO LOCAL ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORITIES. THE NUNCIO, WHO POLITICAL VIEWS ARE REMINISCENT OF THE LATE SENATOR JOSEPH MCCARTHY, REGARDED THE MEETING AS A SUBVERSIVE CONSPIRACY. I WOULD NOT BE SUPRISED IF HE WERE THE INSTIGATOR OF THE GOE'S ACTIONS AGAINST THE CONFEREES.

7. I WILL REPORT IMMEDIATELY THE RESULTS OF THE EMBOFFS

INTERVIEW WITH THE US. CITIZENS.
BLOOMFIELD

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NNN

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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